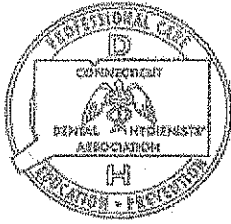




American
Dental
Hygienists'
Association

Connecticut



ORIGIN OF
DENTAL HYGIENE
1913

CONNECTICUT DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION, INC.
ADVOCATES FOR ORAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

February 17, 2009

Dear Governor Rell,

The Connecticut Dental Hygienists Association, Inc. opposes the proposal to eliminate funding for non-emergency dental care for adults enrolled in the Medicaid programs. Access to oral health care continues to be a problem for our low-income adults, including Connecticut's growing elderly population. We know that oral health is linked to total health and that poor oral health exacerbates systemic health problem such as heart disease, diabetes, and poor nutrition. We have concerns about the increased risk for mothers with periodontal disease to give birth to low birth weight babies, and to transmit infectious decay causing bacteria to their children. Without access to regular dental care, disease will progress leading to pain, life threatening infections and tooth loss. The cost of treatment will rise and more adults will seek high cost emergency room care.

We have members who work within community and provide direct service to this population. They see on a daily basis the challenges low income adults face as they try to access oral health care and the physical, emotional and social consequences of poor oral health.

We understand the state of the economy in Connecticut today. However, we believe taking away opportunities for prevention and early interventions will, in fact, be more costly in the long run. We believe in oral healthcare for all-it is the right thing to do for the residents of Connecticut.

Celeste Baranowski, RDH
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